



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
District of New Hampshire*

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MEDIA RELEASE

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**NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND
HIGH INTENSITY DRUG TRAFFICKING AREA ("HIDTA") TASK FORCE**

**METHUEN MAN SENTENCED ON COCAINE CONSPIRACY CHARGE;
OVER \$170,000 FORFEITED**

Re: United States v. Richard DeFrancesco

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE: United States Attorney Tom Colantuono, Drug Enforcement Administration Resident Agent in Charge Leo Ducey, and N.H. Drug Task Force Commander James Norris announced that **Richard DeFRANCESCO**, date of birth of February 16, 1959, of Methuen, Massachusetts was sentenced today on federal cocaine conspiracy charges.

On March 20, 2003, DeFrancesco entered a guilty plea before U.S. District Judge Steven J. McAuliffe to an information charging him with conspiracy to distribute cocaine between July and October, 2002.

At today's sentencing, Judge McAuliffe imposed a sentence of 100 months imprisonment followed by a 3-year period of supervised release during which DeFrancesco's behavior will be monitored by the U.S. Department of Probation.

The investigation of DeFrancesco's activities culminated in the execution of a search warrant at his Methuen home on October 2, 2003, resulting in the seizure of approximately 13 kilos of cocaine, four firearms, and \$170,000 in cash drug proceeds, as well as the arrest of co-conspirator Michael Malignaggi, who also faces sentencing in U.S. District Court.

U.S. Attorney Colantuono stated, "This multi-defendant case involving interstate cocaine trafficking is a prime example of the effectiveness of New England HIDTA, and the Northern New England HIDTA Task Force. Its cooperative efforts with other law enforcement agencies in this case, especially Attorney General Peter Heed's N.H. Drug Task Force, resulted in a massive cocaine seizure, the removal of firearms from the street, and a large cash forfeiture. I will continue to commit federal resources to these and other cooperative efforts between federal and local law enforcement agencies."

The prosecution is being handled by Assistant United States Attorney Joseph N. Laplante, the Lead Attorney for the District of New Hampshire in the New England Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force ("New England OCDEF").